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The Advisor

The Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq's Official Weekly Command Information Report



Two years later

On OIF's second anniversary,
officials tout progress in
security transition efforts

March 19, 2005

MNSTC-I

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Cover: Iraqi Police Commandos pause during a foot patrol of Mosul. Senior Iraqi leaders say attacks by terrorists are on the decline there because of Iraqi Security Forces and citizens who have had enough of terrorists.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

MNSTC-I issues patch guidance

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned or attached to the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq are to wear a newly-approved Multi-National Force - Iraq patch on their left sleeve when they become available, according to an administrative policy memorandum from MNSTC-I Chief of Staff U.S. Army Col. James Laufenburg.

The new patches have been ordered and will be issued in the near future by MNSTC-I's J-4 section and headquarters commandant.

A number of Soldiers are incorrectly wearing the patch of the units they deployed from, Laufenburg said in the memo. Unless a unit deployed to theater in its entirety – with its flag and commander – Soldiers are attached or assigned to MNSTC-I, which falls under the command of MNF-I.



The newly-approved Multi-National Forces—Iraq patch is on order; when available, it should be worn by U.S. Army personnel assigned or attached to MNSTC-I.

Soldiers who are qualified to wear a combat patch on their right sleeve – those who have served more than 30 days in theater – may wear either the Central Command or MNF-I patch, Laufenburg said. They also have the option of wearing the patch of a unit they served with in previous combat operations.



Shaking off the stress

Multi-National Security Transition Command — Iraq personnel enjoyed a Hawaiian luau March 19 in the courtyard of the command's Baghdad headquarters. While appropriate civilian attire was approved and encouraged, some Soldiers opted to shake the stress in uniform.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Allen Thomas

Secretary of the Army gets personal update on MNSTC-I

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The biggest climate change officials have noticed recently is a reduced level of intimidation among Iraqi Security Forces in facing the enemy, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus told Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey.

Harvey, who assumed his post Nov. 19 from Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee, paid a personal visit to the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq's headquarters March 17. He met with Petraeus, MNSTC-I commanding general, for a briefing on the progress of preparing Iraq's forces for taking over security of their country.

"The lift from that was huge," Petraeus said of the estimated eight million voters who turned out for the Jan. 30 elections and the bravery of Iraqi forces who protected them – many of whom died in the process.

Recent polling shows that most Iraqi citizens believe their country is heading in the right direction, he added.

The effort to stabilize Mosul has been particularly challenging, Petraeus said, but everyone there worked hard to portray it otherwise. In one night, there were 35 separate operations being conducted simultaneously, he said. U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi officials there believe the situation is improving, with a number of terrorists in custody.

"The level of effort it's taken has been enormous," Petraeus said. "There may have been a perception that it was easy, but we wanted that perception for the people." The hope, he added, is that Mosul will once again become a destination for visitors.

Elsewhere, the efforts to put Iraq's Security Forces on firm footing is going well, the general said. With a \$5.4 billion program to do that, "there's almost nothing we're not touching," Petraeus said. In the last eight months, for example, close to 120,000 sets of body armor, a little more than 376,000 uniforms and nearly 2.5 million rounds of ammunition have been issued to Iraqi forces; \$300 million has been invested in building up an Iraqi Army base in Taji, similar in size to the U.S.'s Fort Drum in New York, he said. Three other similar-size bases are also operational.

"The bottom line is that the Iraqi Security Forces are in the fight and the Iraqi leadership, with Coalition Forces as backup, is the key," Petraeus said.



Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey examines a map with U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who briefed the Secretary about the progress of MNSTC-I's efforts to train, mentor and equip Iraqi Security Forces.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

Some of the challenges lie in the ranks of senior Iraqi leaders, who aren't accustomed to making key decisions on the battlefield, he noted. There have been successes within the lower levels of Iraqi leadership, particularly in the company levels, Petraeus added.

The Iraqi Army is being built with 10 divisions, while the police side features several specialized groups like SWAT teams, Emergency Response Units, and commandos.

"The special police units have made a significant difference, especially the commandos," Petraeus said.

NATO is also helping with the buildup, with a team of about 130 members in country. They are involved in the operation of two Iraqi military academies and in supplying equipment, such as some 9,000 AK-47 automatic rifles that went to Iraqi forces just before the election, Petraeus said. Hungary donated 77 tanks and Slovenia is sending in 10 aircraft, he added. Help comes from Romania, Denmark and others as well, he said.

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OIF Two Years Later: Progress Continues on All Fronts

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Two years ago, the clock was ticking on President Bush's ultimatum for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq within 48 hours.

On March 19, 2003, two days after the president's televised ultimatum, coalition forces launched operations to disarm Iraq. "On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war," Bush announced from the White House.

The president said the coalition, which consisted of 35 nations at the time but has since grown to 72, was moving to disarm Saddam and put an end to his bloody regime. "Every nation in this coalition has chosen to bear the duty and share the honor of sharing in our common defense," he said.

Two years later, Iraq is on a new course. The dictator who held the country with a firm grip for 35 years is behind bars.

More than 8 million Iraqis exercised their right to choose their new government Jan. 30. And on March 16, Iraq's new Transitional National Assembly was seated. The assembly will write Iraq's new national constitution, to be ratified in October, followed by national elections in December.

Speaking at a White House press briefing earlier this week, Bush called the assembly's seating "a hopeful moment" for Iraq.

U.S. Central Command officials said Iraq's elections marked a milestone in the country's move toward a representative government. "Jan. 30 in Iraq was a galvanizing event," said a senior CENTCOM official on background. "It didn't end the resistance, but it certainly put a light at the end of the tunnel."

Iraq's security forces continue to grow stronger, boosted by success during the elections, when they provided the critical first and second tiers of security at polling stations around the country.

Bush called the progress being made "positive signs that have taken place in the development of the Iraqi secu-

rity forces," but acknowledged "there's still work to be done," something he said U.S. allies understand.

Also in Iraq, hundreds of reconstruction projects are under way, providing essential services like electricity and water throughout the country that are considered vital not only to quality of life, but to security in Iraq. Currently, Baghdad gets about 13 hours of electricity per day, with the rest of Iraq receiving about that same amount. "And it's getting better every day," said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Patrick Kanewske, CENTCOM's chief of current operations.

Two years into Operation Iraqi Freedom, the coalition remains solid and "is probably healthier and stronger than any other international coalition," according to U.S. Marine Corps Col. Kerry Burkholder, deputy chief of coalition operations for U.S. Central Command.

"They are the backbone of everything that has been successful in Iraqi Freedom as well as Enduring Freedom (in Afghanistan)," U.S. Air Force

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In response to Harvey's question about the relationship between the Iraqi people and the country's army, Petraeus said the army has a respectable reputation with citizens.

"In their view, the army is what saved them from Iran," Petraeus said, referring to the Iraqi-Iran war.

Petraeus said he is particularly encouraged by recent efforts by Sunni leaders to integrate their men into the Iraqi forces.

"In all honesty, I'm much more heartened and optimistic than I was back in November, December," Petraeus said. "We feel we have a lot of momentum right now."

Harvey compared the building of Iraq's Security Forces to an engineering project, with the effort being in the design and test phase for a long time. The next phase is production, he said.

"So far, it's going well. The chief and I are very pleased," Harvey said. "I'm cautiously optimistic."



U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus leads Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey off the Phoenix Landing Zone for a briefing on MNSTC-I's progress.
Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

Iraqi Security Forces on their way to assuming control, leaders believe

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

MOSUL, Iraq – The difference between Iraq's army and other security forces under Saddam Hussein's rule and the forces now preparing to take control of their country is like night and day, senior Iraqi officers believe.

"Under Saddam, they did not believe in anything," said Iraqi Gen. Mohammad, referring to members of the previous regime's forces. (His full name is not used for security purposes.) "They were scared of Saddam because he would kill them or put them in prison. There was no freedom or democracy; no soldier had any opinion, could not say anything."

Through an interpreter, Mohammad, commander of the 3rd Brigade of Iraq Police Commandos in Mosul, said Iraq's army still enjoyed a reputation for having strong fighters. But Saddam mistreated them so badly – he compared the deposed leader to Adolf Hitler – that when it came time to fight against Coalition Forces, loyalty to the top was sorely lacking.

"That was the reason why most officers would not fight in the last war," Mohammad said. "This army today, it is the opposite. Everything has changed."

That change is a big reason for much of the success Iraq's Security Forces are having in fighting terrorists, the general said. Soldiers and police forces are willing to fight to the death to bring stability and peace to their country because with that, prosperity that everyone can share will follow, he said.

A native of Baghdad, Mohammad's service to his country began as an Army officer in 1983. He was in college studying medicine when his childhood friend, Iraqi Col. Ali, talked him into transferring to a military college. Ali now commands the 2nd Battalion of Police Commandos in Mosul, serving under Mohammad.

Both officers believe their forces are capable of taking control of Iraq's security, sooner rather than later. The success of the elections, and the number of terrorists being weeded out of the city, has encouraged local citizens to offer up more and more information about insurgent activities and speak out publicly against them. They welcome commandos when they make foot patrols through the city, they added.

"Now, there is not a lot of fighting here because a lot of the terrorists have been caught," Mohammad said. "But we want to continue to clean Mosul of them."

The recent appearance of two local, respected sheiks on Arab television – with Mohammad and Ali sitting beside them – is also expected to help in the fight, the officers said. The sheiks called for an end to insurgent attacks on U.S., Coalition and Iraqi Forces, saying the longer the attacks and killings continue, the longer U.S. and Coalition Forces will have to stay in Iraq.



Iraqi Maj. Heider, commander of a company of Iraqi commandos, and his men get a 'job well done' compliment from a U.S. adviser after completing a foot patrol in Mosul.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

The support of the people makes a difference in how their forces perform, the officers said. But support from the U.S. and Coalition Forces is equally important, they added.

Both officers are optimistic that Iraq's Security Forces will be ready to assume more control of the country within one year. Mohammad has high hopes for the future.

"We want to make a good Army in Iraq. One that will defend only, not to be used to attack our neighbors," he said. "And that the U.S. and Coalition Forces will remain our friends

and continue to support us. We appreciate what they have done for us."

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Brig. Gen. Doug Raaberg, CENTCOM's deputy director of operations, said last week during a Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service interview at the Pentagon. Their support, Raaberg said, has been "just tremendous."

CENTCOM officials acknowledged that while progress continues in Iraq on many fronts, there's still work ahead.

When he announced the start of Operation Iraqi Free-

dom two years ago, Bush stressed that the job would not be finished overnight, and vowed that the United States and coalition would remain in Iraq no longer than absolutely necessary.

"The peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you," Bush said in announcing Operation Iraqi Freedom. "That trust is well placed. The enemies you confront will soon know your skill and bravery. The people you will liberate will witness the honorable and decent spirit of the American military."

War on Terror Creates New Paradigm for Guard, Reserve

By Terri Lukach

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The global war on terror has created a new paradigm for the nation's National Guard and Army Reserve warriors, the Defense Department's senior reserve official said here March 17.

No longer a strategic reserve, today's Guard and Reserve are "true operational forces" that are making a critical difference in Iraq and other places around the world, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall said during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

Hall recently returned from a tour of U.S. forces and facilities in Qatar and Kuwait, where he met with more than 2,000 personnel in nine locations.

Of the total 1.4 million active duty forces, Hall said, 1.2 million -- or 46 percent of the total force -- are Guard or Reserve personnel. Today, 178,000 are currently serving in some capacity in the global war on terror. About 400,000 have been mobilized since the attacks on America on Sept. 11, 2001.

"That tells you we are using the Guard and Reserve in unprecedented ways," Hall said. But while the number is large, he said, it represents only 35 percent of the Guard and Reserve -- which means that 65 percent are not being used. Stress on the force, he said, is primarily a result of "low density, high-use" career fields. "We are not out of people, but out of balance," he said. "So we are rebalancing."

The Army is adding more military police and civil affairs personnel and converting other personnel, such as artillery, into more needed skill sets, he explained.

Hall said the military also must ensure that the Guard and Reserve are totally integrated into the overall force, with the same training, the same pay, and the same personnel system. "We are moving towards that now," he said, "and are halfway there."

Hall said the move to develop a common pay system will eliminate many of the problems that result from transitioning personnel from inactive service to active service and then back again. "That's where pay often gets fouled up," he said.

He also praised Congress for authorizing expanded Tricare health coverage last year for Guard and Reserve personnel.

He explained that service personnel and their families now are eligible for benefits 90 days prior to activation as well as for up to six months after demobilization.

For every 90 days of active duty service, Hall said, Guard and Reserve personnel are eligible for one year of Tricare coverage for a modest fee. That means, for example, that personnel who have served two years of active duty are eligible for eight years of health care coverage. What's more, the coverage will be retroactive for those who already have served.

Hall said the department also was working to provide additional incentives for physicians around the country to include Tricare patients in their practices.

As for recent reports that the services are unable to meet their recruitment targets, Hall said it was important to get to "ground truth" on this issue. At the end of 2004, all components, with the exception of the Army Guard and Reserve, had met their end-strength goals, Hall said. The same is true of the first few months of this year, he said, with the exception of the Army, which is about 17 percent below its

end-strength goals.

Hall said the military has put additional recruiters in the field, as well as in theater to ensure that any who want to re-enlist are able to do so. Up-front incentives are also important, he said, noting that Congress has authorized a \$15,000 tax-free retention bonus. Hall said 600 personnel received this bonus in 2004, and 1,200 have already received it in 2005.

Hall praised the pride, dedication, and sense of purpose he observed in the troops during his visit to Qatar and Kuwait. There were no "sour faces," he said. "When you see men smiling and happy to be doing their job, that's something you can't fake. Sure, they'd rather be at home," he said, but they take pride in knowing that "they are doing what they were trained to do."

Hall said he remembers well the "greatest generation" who came back from World War II and "built this country." Looking at today's military men and women, he said, "I see the next greatest generation. They are all heroes, and I thank them."

Hall also thanked Americans across the country for the honor and tribute they have bestowed on returning vets and the nation's employers for making it easier for the Guard and Reserve to serve.

"When you see men smiling and happy to be doing their job, that's something you can't fake."

***—Thomas Hall
Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs***

Rumsfeld Praises Troops' work on Iraq's 'Positive Changes'

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – On the eve of the two-year anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld praised those who have made changes in Iraq and, consequently the Middle East, possible.

"The positive changes under way would certainly not have happened ... without the hard work and the dedication of America's men and women in uniform, their families, and indeed, the efforts of all of you who have devoted your lives to our country's defense," he said March 18 at the Pentagon town hall meeting for service members and Defense Department civilians. "I want you to know that we are grateful and your country is grateful to you for your service."

U.S. Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined Rumsfeld for the meeting and echoed the secretary's praise.

Rumsfeld noted Iraq's improving economy and rising property values as indicators of progress. He also said refugees are starting to return now that the interim government has replaced Saddam Hussein and his Baathist regime.

"Since the early days of Operation Iraqi

Freedom, the coalition has engaged in a test of wills with an enemy determined to derail Iraq's progress," he said. "Their goal was to force the coalition into retreat, but their mission failed. The enemy sought to test America and the Iraqi people's will, and they found it firm."

A strong proof of the Iraqis' firm will was in the millions of Iraqis who showed a great deal of courage providing security, working in the polling places and voting on Jan. 30, Rumsfeld said. The voters passed graffiti reading "You vote, you die" just to get to the polls.

Iraqis, despite terrorists' attempts to derail the country's progress, are pushing ahead to force a brighter future, he said. That spirit, the secretary added, is setting an example across the region.

"In the last two years from Afghanistan and Iraq to Ukraine and now the streets of Lebanon, we've seen again and again the great sweep of human history is for freedom, and we are on freedom's side," he said. "And the enemy's extremist ideology will meet its end when (the) wider Middle East sheds itself of tyranny and of violence and extremism and carves out a future of tolerance."

That, Rumsfeld said, will continue to be the goal despite changes in the coalition. With rumblings of countries consid-

ering withdrawing troops, Rumsfeld said he is not concerned, and that in fact he expects coalition numbers to fluctuate as they have from the beginning.

"Each country has its own circumstances," he said. "It has its own force capability and force-sustainment capability, and it also has its own political circumstance."

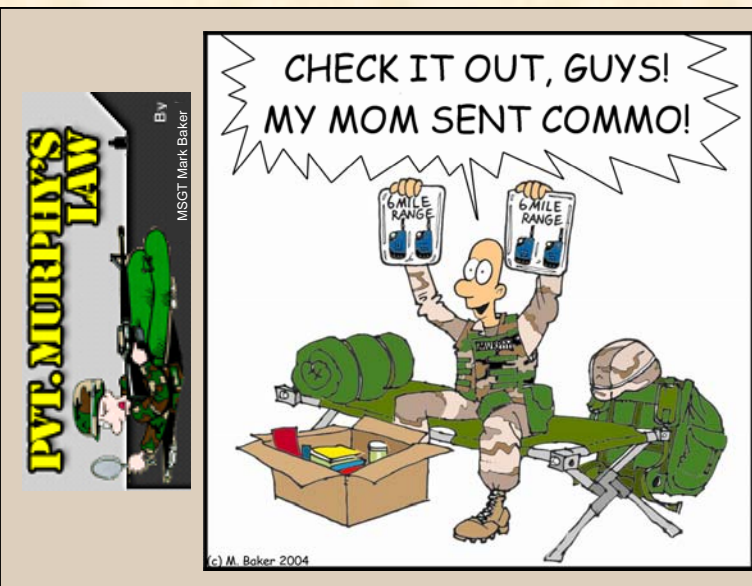
While some countries may feel they need to bring troops home, that doesn't necessarily mean that they also are leaving the coalition. Instead, they may feel that they prefer to assist in NATO's train-and-equip effort or another related activity, Rumsfeld noted.

The secretary said that while U.S. troops in Iraq numbered about 152,000 surrounding the elections, that number stands to drop some.

"We're dropping down to something like 17 brigades over the coming month, maybe six weeks," he said. In that period, he explained, troop strength should drop to 135,000 to 140,000.

Iraqi force numbers are on track to pass the 200,000 mark, he added. With those increases, Rumsfeld said, U.S. troop levels could be adjusted.

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Iraqi Forces Aim for Independent Operations

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD – Enabling Iraqi forces to conduct independent counterinsurgency operations is now the goal of coalition forces in Iraq, the commander of Multinational Corps Iraq said here today.

Army Lt. Gen. John Vines said in an interview that the capability of the Iraqi forces is growing quickly. “Sooner rather than later, Iraq will be able to provide for its own security,” he said. “What we will see, very soon, is Iraqi soldiers and policemen and other security forces where previously the coalition has been doing that.”

As Iraqi forces improve, Vines said, he suspects there will be “fewer coalition and fewer Americans here in Iraq at the end of this year.”

Vines was quick to point out that any decision regarding force size will be driven by events on the ground. He said the way the Transitional National Assembly approaches the constitutional issue and works to include all Iraqis will also have a bearing on the number of troops. The National Assembly is scheduled to meet March 17.

Vines, who also commanded forces in Afghanistan, said the lesson he learned from that conflict and his time in Iraq is that, “You can’t give freedom to someone; they have to take it. You can’t present it and hope it sticks; they have to seize it.”

He said freedom requires a vision from the people that is mirrored by their leaders. “We can’t fight for someone else’s freedom; it doesn’t work,” he said. “They have to be prepared to fight for their own.”

Right now, the coalition supports Iraqi forces. Vines looks to the day when coalition forces simply provide insurance to

operating Iraqi forces. Iraqis are taking the lead in many operations in the country, and they are learning and growing all the time, he said.

“The paradigm that had coalition forces doing most of the fighting will be reversed,” Vines said. “Iraqi security forces will be able to secure their own future. And they have capabilities we don’t have. They have language skills. They have cultural insights. They recognize accents. They have access to intelligence we don’t have.”

He said Iraqi security forces cover the spectrum in terms of capabilities, and he admits they have some learning and growing to do. “But the fact is,” he added, “Iraqi forces have performed brilliantly, most recently in the Iraqi elections.”

He said the security forces protected the Iraqi people as they voted in numbers “that should shame most western democracies.” Iraqis voted despite threats and intimidation, and Iraqi security forces stood up to the insurgents.

Vines said the elections marked a huge step for the Iraqi people psychologically. “There’re exceedingly proud of seizing their own destiny instead of it being imposed by someone,” he said. “The anti-Iraqi forces -- the insurgents, terrorists, murderers -- underestimated the effect the election would have, not just in Iraq, but around the world.”

The Iraqi people are realizing that terrorists like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi are not patriots fighting to free the land of infidels, the general said. These are murderous thugs who use power for their own reasons, he added.

Vines said coalition forces have been close to capturing Zarqawi any number of times and will keep after him. “To strike oil, you have to keep drilling,” he said, adding that the coalition is getting intelligence from some members of Zarqawi’s cell.

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And while Pace said the focus should continue to be on warfighting capacity, that capacity includes some nontraditional elements.

“Warfighting capacity includes ... language and cultural education skills. ... It includes satellites,” he said. “It includes all the things that not only bring kinetic energy against the enemy, but also allow us to shape the environment before, during and after combat.”

Rumsfeld added that with America’s

“can do” spirit, caution should be taken not to do too much. He said a country at some point needs to stop doing and start teaching so that developing countries can provide for themselves.

The secretary called attention to an “America Supports You” lapel pin he was wearing, and urged the audience to check out a DoD Web site on the program that illustrates the level of support the American people have for the men and women wearing the uniform of their country.

“If you go to that site, you can find ways that you can participate in sup-

porting the troops,” the secretary said. “You can find ways that hundreds of other people across the country are engaged in activities that are worthwhile.”

“And I hope you will do it,” he continued. “I hope you’ll also tell your friends, because we are so fortunate as a country to have such wonderful people put up their hands and say they’re willing to serve our country, and to serve it at risk to their lives, and to serve it with such wonderful skill and dedication.”

Iraqi Security Forces / In Brief

Terrorists claim responsibility for recent MOA vehicle bomb attack

BAGHDAD – Ten terrorists captured by Iraqi forces have confessed to planning and executing the recent attack on the Ministry of Agriculture, in which a dump truck full of explosives detonated near the building, according to a multinational forces report.

The terrorists also confessed to an attack on a bus that killed an Iraqi infantry officer, a Coalition officer and his interpreter, and another attack on a traffic circle in Al Nasour that targeted an Iraqi officer and members of the security advisors office, the report said.

Members of the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Public Order Battalion, led by Iraqi Col. Basim, arrested the men after raiding a house March 18. They confiscated two vehicles that were in the process of being turned into car bombs and a cache of weapons, including two grenades, four rockets and launchers, several small arms, detonation cord, remote-controlled devices and other items used to make bombs. They also discovered \$8,480 in U.S. currency, \$375,000 in Iraqi dinars, five blank Iraqi passports, forged Iraqi national identification cards, cell phones and cameras.

No injuries were reported as a result of the operation. An investigation into the terrorist cell continues.

Terrorists confess to beheadings, IED attacks

MOSUL – The Iraqi police service's Emergency Response Unit conducted several operations against insurgents Feb. 12 through March 7, assaulting 49 buildings and capturing two insurgent cell leaders, two high value targets, and several other suspects who are now in custody of the Ministry of Interior.

One of the cell leaders confessed to 45 murders, numerous rapes, improvised explosive device attacks and the murder of an ERU operator. Two men captured during raids by the ERU confessed to kidnapping and beheading

seven people, including the ERU member, according to a multinational force report.

Graduates fill vacancies

KIRKUSH – More than 2,900 Iraqi soldiers graduated March 13 as part of the Direct Recruit Replacements program at the Iraqi Training Battalion at Kirkush Military Training Base.

These graduates, all with prior military service, spent three weeks in basic skills refresher courses focusing on traffic control points, local security patrols, and fixed site security.

The soldiers will fill vacancies throughout Iraq.

IIF kills two after attack

MOSUL – Members of the 24th Battalion, 6th Iraqi Intervention Force Brigade and other Coalition Forces killed two insurgents after the unit was attacked by insurgents March 14.

The IIF recovered a mortar tube used by the insurgents. One Iraqi soldier was treated for injuries.

Iraqi Police arrest Saudi

KIRKUK – Iraqi Police arrested a Saudi man carrying bombs in his vehicle March 14 while attempting to enter a Kirkuk airfield.

The man was driving a vehicle with 14 120mm artillery rounds capable of

being used as separate improvised explosive devices, multinational reports say. The rounds were defused and the driver is in the custody of the Iraqi police.

Academy graduates 144

AL KUT – The Iraq Police Service graduated 144 new police officers from the Al Kut Regional Training Academy March 16. This was the third class to complete the eight week training course from the Al Kut facility.

The basic police training program is designed to provide fundamental and democratic policing skills based on international human rights standards to the students in preparation for assuming police officer responsibilities. The program consists of academic study of general policing topics combined with a strong focus on tactical operational policing skills.

To date, more than 25,000 police recruits have completed the eight-week training course developed for new recruits. An additional 35,000 police officers have completed the three-week Transitional Integration Program course that provides officers with prior experience a condensed version of the longer basic police training course.

The Al Kut facility is a joint training center with the Iraqi Army, Department of Border Enforcement personnel and Iraqi Police utilizing the facility. The newly graduated police will immediately report for duty and take up their assignments at their respective police stations in Wasit Province.



Body armor protects Iraqi police officer

Iraqi police officers were attacked March 13 while patrolling a neighborhood in Tall Afar, with insurgents firing small arms, mortars and grenades. Two suspects were arrested. The body armor one Iraqi police officer wore protected him from serious injury when a mortar landed nearby. The Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq has issued roughly 120,000 sets of body armor to Iraqi Security Forces since July.

Iraqi Security Forces / In Brief

Tips lead to weapons

FALLUJAH – A tip from a local resident led Iraqi Intervention Force soldiers to search a home, where they found three AK-47 assault rifles, three full magazines and 50 belts of machine gun rounds.

Another tip led the soldiers to a weapon similar to the AK-47 that fires grenades. Two people were detained for questioning. The soldiers are members of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade.

Iraqi Police graduate 156 from advanced training

BAGHDAD – The Iraqi Police Service graduated 156 police officers from advanced and specialty courses at the Adnan Training Facility March 17.

The courses consist of Basic Criminal Investigations with 21 graduates, Interviews & Interrogations with 22 graduates, Internal Controls with 25 graduates, Violent Crime Investigation with 40 graduates, Kidnapping Investigation with 15 graduates and Critical Incident Management with 33 graduates.

Iraqi Border Police graduate 11 from Z-Backscatter course

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement graduated 11 officers from the Z-Backscatter Imaging System course March 17. The training course instructs students on the operation of the “Z-Backscatter” equipment.

This unique technology provides operators the ability to create a photo-like image, similar to an x-ray, without a detector on the opposite side of the target. Backscatter x-rays are typically used for high threat and detection applications. They have been particularly successful in highlighting explosive materials in vehicles or on persons, and detecting drugs or weapons hidden in vehicles or on persons, as well as people hidden in containers or vehicles.

The five-day course uses both classroom and hands-on training. Eighty-five students have previously completed the course and are certified as Z-Backscatter operators.

“Deployment of the Z-Backscatter vans to the ports of entry throughout the country will act as a first line of defense against insurgents, smugglers and anyone else attempting to illegally enter or transport contraband into Iraq. This technology will enhance Iraq’s ability to defend its borders and provide a higher level of security for its citizens,” says Lt. Col. Peter Vogel, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team program manager for the Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement.

The Z Backscatter system is currently in use at several border crossings in Iraq and the Baghdad International Airport.

Thousands of soldiers head for Iraqi Army units

BAGHDAD, – Several hundred men who showed up at the front gate of an Iraqi Army base in southeast Iraq immediately after the country’s Jan. 30 elections graduated March 17 from basic combat training.

The 766 volunteers, who had no prior military experience before seeking to join the Army, went through eight weeks of training conducted by elements of the Iraqi Training Battalion and the 5th Division.

In addition, 2,500 Direct Recruit Replacements graduated March 17 at the same base. The DRR soldiers, who have prior military experience, go through a three-week refresher course.

The soldiers will be assigned to the 3rd and 5th Divisions of the Iraqi Army. They will report for duty after a brief period of leave.

Iraqi commandos capture insurgents

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Police Commandos captured three men identified as Syrians March 13. The suspects were in possession of several weapons, in-

cluding rocket-propelled grenades and mortar rounds, according to a multinational force report.



Iraqi Air Force pilots recently spotted an oil pipeline fire and notified authorities on the ground of its location. Iraqi pilots are undergoing training on the Forward Looking Infrared Radar systems, which gives them the ability to identify targets at night.

Photo courtesy CMATT

Iraqi Security Forces capture weapons, insurgents

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army soldiers apprehended two men identified as insurgents and two other suspects during a March 17 search of an area of Al Kasik.

The soldiers of the 20th Battalion, 8th Brigade, 3rd Division were assisted in the operation by 15 U.S. advisers and three helicopters.

Members of the Iraqi Intervention Forces conducting patrols in Mosul March 17 discovered a weapons cache consisting of two mortar tubes, 12 mortar rounds, 1,500 rounds of belted ammunition, a rocket-propelled grenade and plastic explosives. The soldiers are with the 24th Battalion, 6th Brigade, 1st Division.

Earlier in the week, soldiers with the 18th Battalion, 7th Brigade, 5th Division participated in a joint operation with Coalition Forces that broke up a fake identification card ring in the Fallujah area. Ten people were arrested, including five identified as high-value targets.

Capture by Police Commandos brings 'relief', confessed insurgent says

By Capt. Steve Alvarez
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

SAMARRA, Iraq – In recent days Iraqi Police Commandos have seized illicit weapons and captured several insurgents, one, a Saudi who denounced the insurgency, and according to multinational officials, was "relieved" to be captured by the commandos.

The apprehensions began March 11 when the Police Commando's 1st Battalion set up a series of flash checkpoints west of Samarra. According to officials, drivers of an approaching vehicle saw the checkpoint, turned and attempted to escape. The commandos pursued them and the vehicle crashed and flipped after the commandos shot their tires.

Captured in the vehicle were three suspects, a Saudi, a Syrian, and an Iraqi, all who had rifles and grenades with them in the vehicle. Officials state the Syrian provided a partial confession for his involvement in a number of attacks, including destruction of the oil pipeline that runs to the west of Samarra.

The Saudi cooperated with officials and confessed involvement in one attempted attack on multinational forces.

Officials say that the Saudi eagerly gave detailed accounts of how he was recruited by the insurgency, his motives to join the insurgency, how he traveled to Iraq and how he joined the insurgency. In addition the Saudi, a former college student provided information on his training, locations of training sites, tactics he was taught and attacks he was instructed to conduct.

The insurgents' training, according to the Saudi, consisted of shooting 45 rounds with an AK-47, and familiarization with a rocket propelled grenade launcher, a weapon he did not fire because his trainers said was "too expensive" to fire.

The Saudi said he and his group planned to attack a U.S. dismounted patrol several weeks ago, but a U.S. sniper shot one of the insurgents, killing him, and the insurgents cancelled the attack. Additionally, the Saudi told officials he joined the terrorists in Iraq primarily to target the U.S. military, but he quickly became disillusioned with the insurgents after only several weeks.

Part of the Saudi's disappointment with the insurgents, officials say, was that the insurgents did not pray regularly and "were only interested in money." The insurgents, the Saudi said, were preoccupied with hijacking vehicles and the value of vehicles.

The Saudi admitted to officials that he "had made a huge mistake" by joining the insurgency and that he had a very different view of American soldiers after watching them operate in Iraq. He had seen U.S. soldiers giving candy to children and on one occasion, a U.S. soldier waved to him.

The captured insurgent went on to say that he didn't believe he would be a martyr if he died in Iraq. When officials asked the Saudi why he didn't leave the insurgency, he said he felt like a captive and feared for his life. He was relieved, he added, to be captured by the commandos.

That same day, the 3rd Police Commando Battalion captured 10 suspected insurgents based on intelligence obtained from detainees already in custody, and on March 12, the 1st Police Commando Battalion conducted a raid in a small village outside Balad based on a tip received by the commandos from a villager. The tip was accurate as the commandos netted five insurgents.

The 3rd Battalion also discovered a sizeable cache of weapons in Samarra containing several new RPG launchers with night sights, ammunition, 50 mortar rounds, 12 grenades and two improvised explosive devices. Officials said the cache was under the floor of a house. Officials were led to the house after another tip informed the commandos of the cache.

On March 13, the 3rd Battalion continued to find weapons caches, this time, one located in a Samarra cemetery. The commandos recovered an RPG launcher, a 60mm mortar with 12 rounds, a machine gun with several hundred rounds, and various artillery rounds and detonation cord.

After the bulk of the operations ended, Gen. Adnan Thabit, the Ministry of Interior special adviser to the commandos, chaired a meeting attended by community leaders in the Samarra area. The mayor, temporary police chief, senior religious leader and tribal sheiks discussed the operations. Community leaders support the commando presence, officials say.

Adnan reports that citizens are steadily providing information about insurgents. Three separate IEDs were found and destroyed as a result of tips to Adnan's office. The commandos are also receiving reports at their checkpoints—the 1st Battalion's executive officer was handed a note at a checkpoint telling him where a known terrorist was sleeping.

Officials say that city improvements will soon begin including sanitation services, restoring electricity, and a major effort to repair roads and water lines.

The Saudi said he and his group planned to attack a U.S. dismounted patrol several weeks ago, but a U.S. sniper shot one of the insurgents, killing him, and the insurgents cancelled the attack.

Iraq's MOD takes control of first base support unit

By U.K. Royal Navy Lt. Cmdr. Andy Fearnley
Logistics Advisor, Umm Qasr

UMM QASR, Iraq – Coalition forces turned over control of the Umm Qasr Naval Base to Iraq's Ministry of Defense March 17, the first of many future transitions that put Iraqi leaders in charge of their military installations.

All base infrastructure, life support functions and watercraft maintenance at the base had been provided by a Coalition-funded contractor. Now, a MOD base support unit has responsibility for running the base.

The base is the home of the Iraqi Navy and Naval Infantry Battalion. It is adjacent to the Umm Qasr Commercial Port, Iraq's largest commercial shipping port. Leaders see it as the key to a new, stronger Iraqi economy since more than 50 percent of all international trade passes through the port.

The Iraqi Navy and Naval Infantry Battalion are responsible for protecting the port, Iraqi territorial waters, maritime trade and offshore oil platforms.

A team made up of MOD officials and personnel from the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq's Coalition Military Assistance Training Team travelled from Baghdad to Umm Qasr to conduct the transition.

"This transition is just another great step toward a strong and independent Iraqi military," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Carolyn Patrick, MNSTC-I's assistant chief of staff for base management. "I am very proud of the work done by my predecessors and the team that made this happen."

The experience of transitioning control at Umm Qasr will help when it comes time to make future Base Support Unit transfers, Patrick said.

NATO holds second leadership course for Iraqi Security Forces

By Borkur Gunnarsson
NTM-I NATO Public Affairs

STAVANGER, Norway – Twenty-seven key leaders from Iraq's security forces are training at NATO's Joint Warfare Center. This is the second key leader course held at the center in support of NATO's Iraqi training mission, announced at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, and is one of several planned training opportunities at NATO training and education facilities this year.

The course, which started March 14, has been tailored to Iraqi requirements. Participants include specially selected "key leaders" in Iraq's security forces, senior military and civilian staff from Iraq's ministries of Defense and the Interior.

The course focuses on managing an operational-level headquarters, instruction on crisis management, command and control of forces, the operational planning process, and integration of all aspects of civil-military cooperation, including liaison with the United Nations, Red Cross, and other international organizations.

As NATO's lead center for training Alliance battle staffs for Afghanistan and NATO Response Force, the Joint Warfare Center offers training relevant to the challenges and opportunities these key Iraqi leaders face in rebuilding their country's security institutions.

The center is one of several NATO education and training facilities under Allied Command Transformation, one of NATO's two strategic commands. Commanded by Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, the Allied Com-

mand Transformation also heads the NATO Training and Equipment Coordination Group, which facilitates Iraqi requests to NATO for training and equipment.

Iraqi training will also be conducted this year at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, and the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. Allied Command Transformation's education, training, and coordination efforts are conducted in support of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, lead by NATO's other strategic command, Allied Command

Iranian foreign fighter captured

NAJAF – Border enforcement forces captured an insurgent near Najaf March 15 who said he was Iranian and a member of a group called Ansar Al Sunna.

The man said he came to Iraq six months ago and was trained in the northern part of the country by a Syrian intelligence officer, according to a multinational forces report. The man also said he cooperated with Syrian nationals who attacked a Coalition Forces convoy with a car bomb and rocket-propelled grenades.

Specialized training for Iraq's Air Force

TAJI — Iraqi Air Force pilots with the 3rd Squadron are receiving training in night flying procedures and in the use of Forward Looking Infrared Radar systems, which will give them the ability to identify targets under most night-time weather conditions.

The new capability will help pilots maintain 24-hour surveillance of Iraqi infrastructure sites, oil pipelines in particular.

Iraqi air traffic controllers are getting on-the-job training with Coalition counterparts in Taji. Once the training is complete, the Iraqis will control all air traffic – including Coalition flights – in and out of Taji.

Germany partners with Iraq, United Arab Emirates for training

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – An agreement between Iraq, Germany and the United Arab Emirates to jointly train Iraqi military forces is clearing the way for the preparation and equipping of an Iraqi engineering unit.

The agreement, signed during German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's March 4-5 visit to the UAE, has Germany supplying instructors and equipment such as graders, bulldozers, 20-ton cranes and cement mixers to the unit, which will consist of 250 Iraqi trainees. The UAE will cover the expenses for the trainers, trainees and interpreters, according to German Embassy officials.

Bruska Noori Shaways, Secretary General of Iraq's Ministry of Defense, and Lt. Gen. Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaihy, chief of staff of the UAE Armed Forces, represented their respective countries in the agreement.

Germany and the UAE have previously cooperated in the training of Iraqi troops. In November 2004, 122 Iraqi personnel were trained to operate, repair and maintain 100 Daimler-Mercedes five-ton trucks that Germany sold to the

UAE. The UAE paid to transport the trucks to Iraq, along with the expenses of the German trainers, translators and Iraqi trainees.

Germany has also been involved in helping to train Iraqi civil police, providing about a dozen high-level trainers last year to teach 431 Iraqi police officers the fundamentals of crime scene investigation.

More recently, 30 Iraqi police officers are going through a four-week personal protection training program led by eight German instructors. That training is designed for Iraqi police officers who will be protecting Iraqi politicians.

The same group of Iraqi police officers will continue with a course on hostage rescue techniques, with training provided by UAE police. Germany will provide radios, some weapons, ammunition and other equipment for the training, which will be conducted at a UAE facility.

Germany hopes to fulfill an Iraqi request in the future to provide training in explosive ordnance detachment tactics, officials said.

Iraqi equipment rollup

A look at some of the equipment delivered to Iraqi Security Forces this week

Ammunition.....	4,665,400 rounds
Up-Armored Humvees.....	10
RMPs.....	28
T55 Recovery vehicle.....	1
Individual body armor.....	1,250
Chevy Lumina.....	40
Chevy SUV Trailblazer.....	32
Nissan Cabstars.....	34
2 ½-Ton Trucks.....	19
AK-47s.....	320
Explosive detector systems.....	2



British Dignitaries visit IMAR

Several British officials — Elwyn Lloyd (left, blue shirt), Lynne Jones, George Howarth and Boris Johnson — visited the Iraqi Military Academy in Al Rustamiyah. The academy, modeled after Britain's Sandhurst Royal Military Academy, is training future Iraqi military officers in one-year courses. Built by Britain in 1924, it was abandoned in 2003. MNSTC-I and its Coalition Military Assistance Training Team is rebuilding it with a \$70 million budget.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Allen Thomas

“If everyone is thinking alike, then someone isn’t thinking.”

— Gen. George S. Patton (1885-1945) —